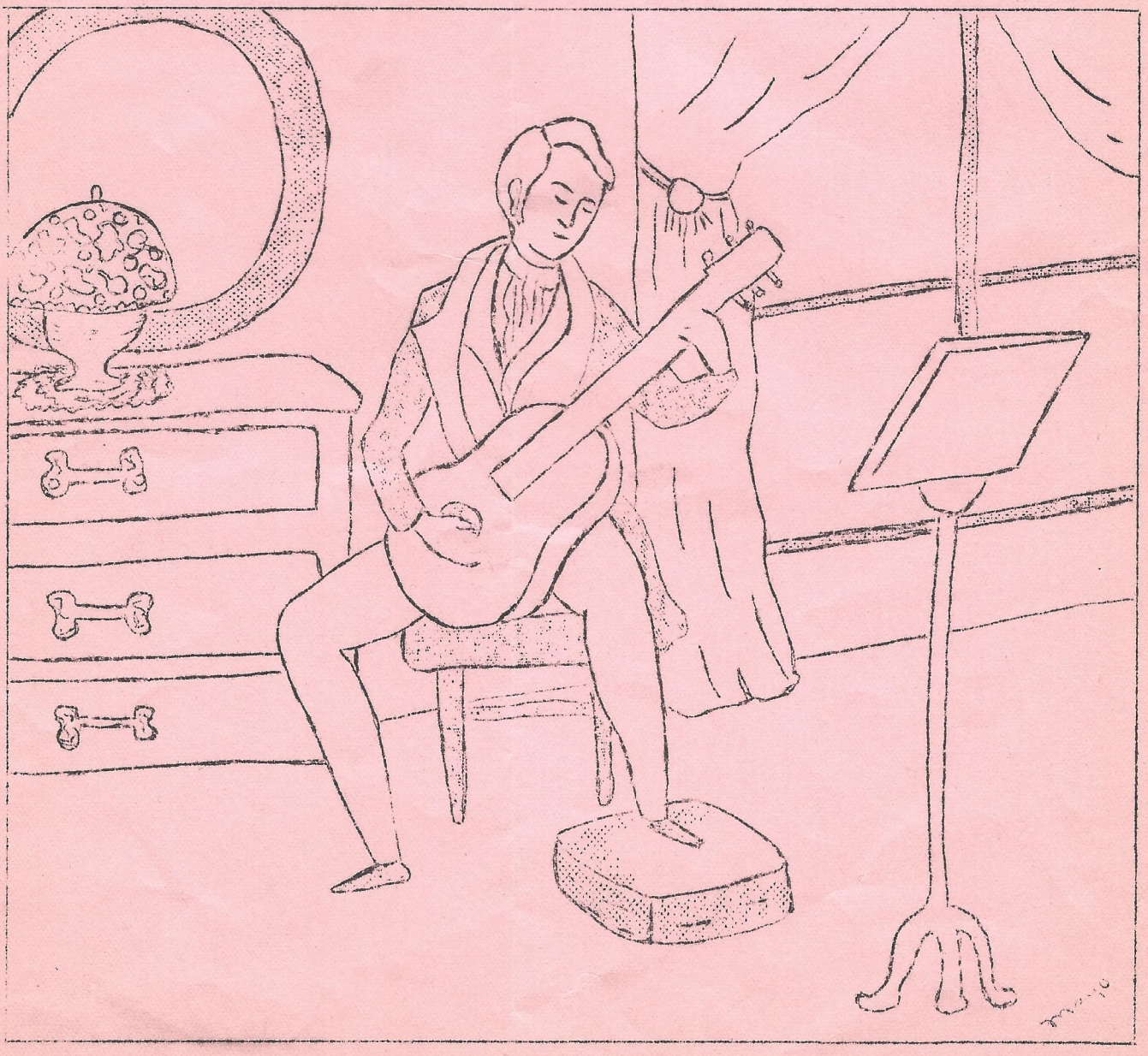
PROMENADE

A MAGAZINE of AMERICAN FOLKLORE

VOL. V ISSUE I



AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP
NEW YORK, N.Y.

"The purpose of the American Square-Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American folk culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views." Constitution of the A S D G.

PROMENADE

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STAFF

Margot Mayo, Editor
Stuart Jamieson
Barbara Altstadt
and other ASDG members

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WONDER WANDERINGS

Sorry we have to apologize again for the retarded appearance of Promenade. It was one of our post-war dreams to be able to meet our dead-line each month and to be able to offer you a better magazine.

However, one or two people alone can not run a group, attend rehearsals, learn calls and songs, give demonstrations and teach the dances to various groups, and also work on a monthly magazine. And that's exactly what Stuart and I have been trying to do these last few months. Besides the insignificant detail of earning a living!! However, conditions are going to change, around these parts, the status quo shore ain't satisfactory.

Our radio programs have been taking up a lot of our time and interest. Some sixteen members of the group, most of them in the Junior group, have been meeting several times a week to learn folk songs which I collected down South and which are seldom heard on the folk song programs in New York. We've been comparing these contemporary folk songs with the original European song-sources, whenever possible and also tracing the use of the secular tune in the religious folk hymns and shaped-note hymns of the old song books. All this takes a tremendous amount of time, but it's lots of fun!

The ASDG has just completed a movie for the State Department and we've developed a healthy respect for movie actors. Pete Seeger is featured in this short, singing a lot of the old American favorite folk songs. The movie will be distributed over seas and in the future (near or far, who knows?) in this country.

The ASDG, with Manny calling, has made its first album of recordings for Keynote. The square dances in this album are from the north eastern part of our country, and combine some simpler squares with some more complicated dances. The album, untitled as yet, will soon be ready for distribution.

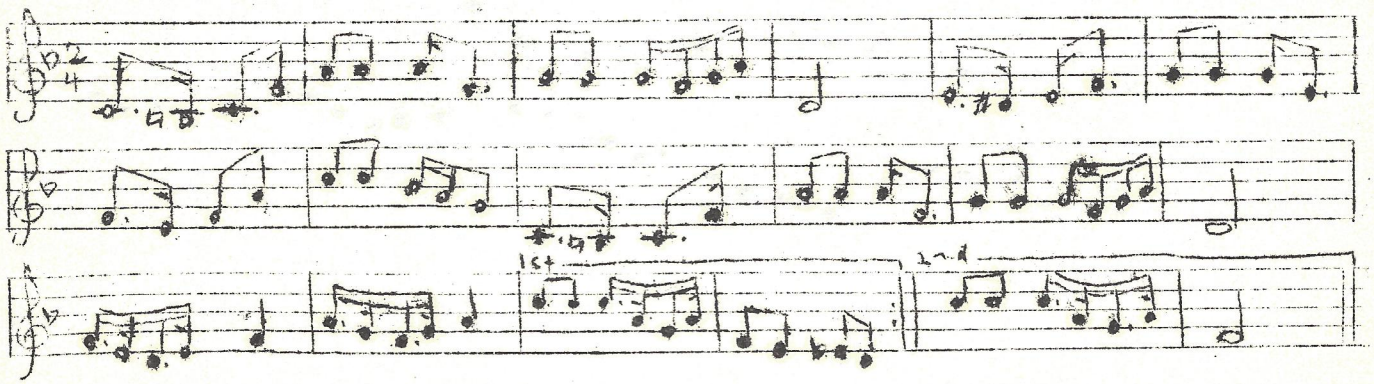
There's a lot of square dancing done in Denver, Colorada, and in the next issue of Promenade we're going to print a letter from one of our subscribers, K. L. Smith, describing these dances. But you can get information about these groups by contacting Mr and Mrs J. T. Lang, 536 S. Vine St., Denver, or the City Recreation Dept.

Margot

AN ADIRONDACK SCHOTTISH

In the central Adirondacks the schottish is used as a break between sets of three square dances, along with the waltz. The tune (which is the only schottish tune that the musicians could remember) has the air of a hit of the '80s or '90s and is still popular around Big Moose and Eagle Bay, N. Y. where it outranks any and all jive tunes.

In the last century this schottish was known as the "Military Schottish" or, "Dancing In The Barn". The latter name seems to be the origin of the term "Barn Dancing", often used for "Square Dancing".



THE POSITION:

The dancers stand side by side, the gent at the lady's left, with inside arms around each other's waists.

THE DANCE:

A. The gent starts with his left foot, the lady with her right, going forward:
Step on outside foot, close inside foot to outside foot, step on outside foot, and hop on outside foot.

B. This time the gent starts with his right, the lady with her left foot; both continue to move forward.
Step, close, step, hop.

C. Start again with the gent's left foot and the lady's right.
Step hop, step hop, step hop, step hop.
During this step the couple turns, the gent backing up as the lady goes forward.

SOME VARIATIONS:

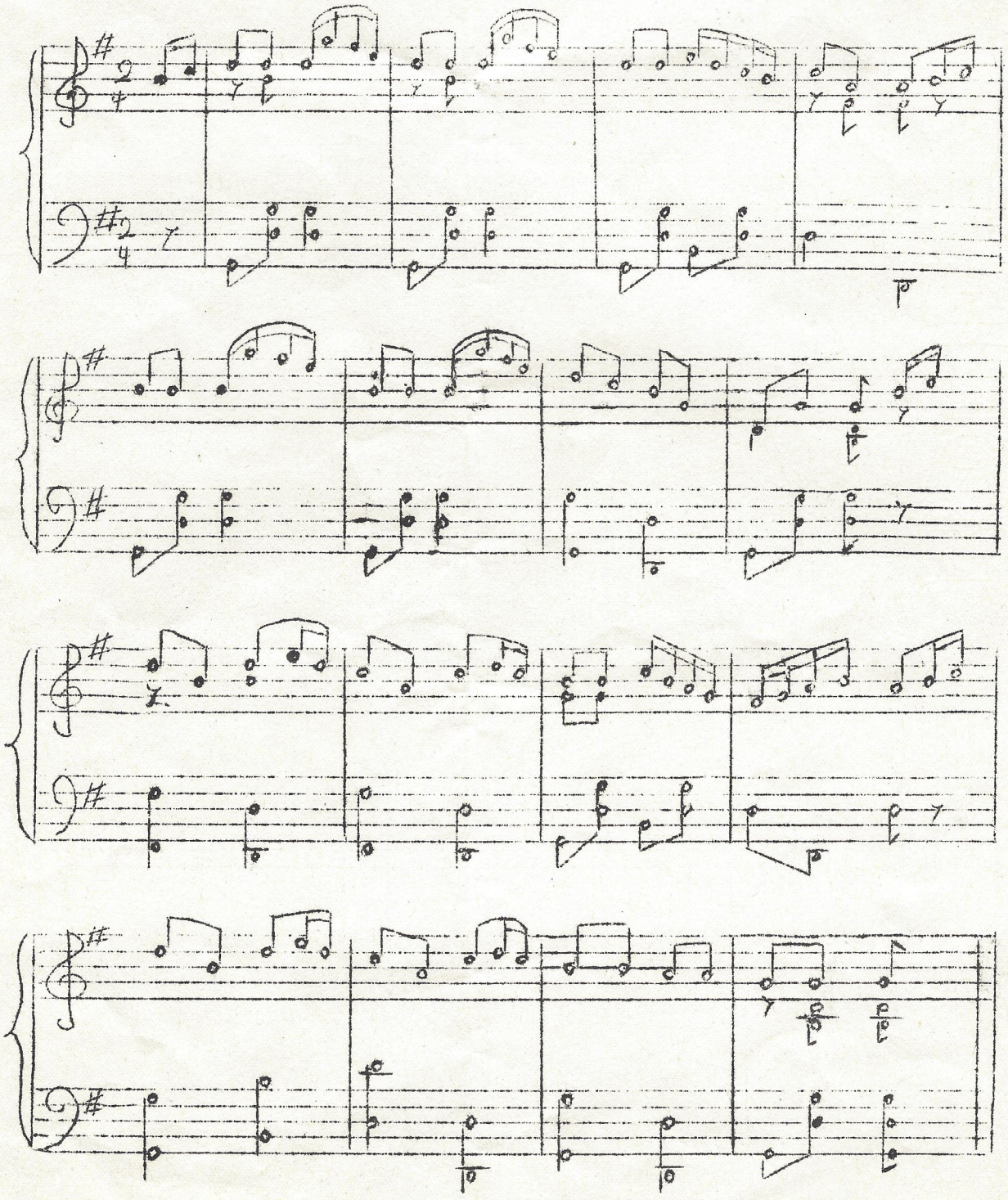
I. Move forward during part A, and backward during part B.

II. Do parts A and B in place. Instead of step, close, step, hop, (part A) the dancers step on the outside foot, without moving forward. Then they step on the inside foot and swing the other foot forward, hop on the outside foot and swing the inside foot back. Now, hop on the outside foot, and simultaneously bring the inside foot forward, in position for part B.
Part B is done in the above manner, starting with the inside foot. The above two steps are done without moving forward, the knees are bent and the body is swayed slightly with each step.
Part C is done in the usual manner.

III. Part C may be done by turning to the left, or just traveling straight ahead, or backwards.

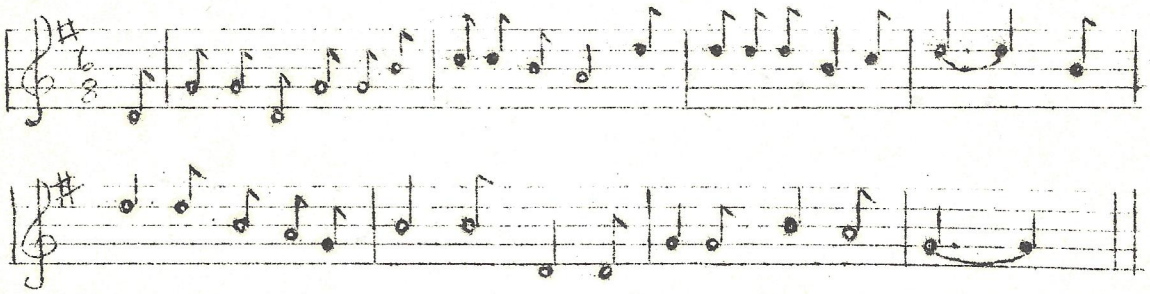
LAMP LIGHTER'S REEL

An excellent square dance tune, especially for New England longways and square sets. The accompaniment is very simple and we expect you to make up your own arrangement of the tune.



FAIR ELLENDER

This ballad was sung to Margot, in the summer of 1935, by a fellow counselor at a camp in Massachusetts. She came from Illinois and learned the song from her mother, who learned it from her mother. This ballad is widely known in all sections of the country and has many titles, but the versions are all similar as to the story, if not to the melody.



1) Oh mother, oh mother, come riddle my sports
Come riddle them once for all
Shall I go marry Fair Ellender
Or bring the Brown Girl home ?

2) The Brown Girl she has house and lands
Fair Ellender she has none
I charge you as a blessing
Go bring the Brown Girl home.

3) Go saddle up my milk-white steed
Go saddle him up indeed
That I may get on him and invite Fair Ellender
Fair Ellender to my wedding.

4) She dressed herself in scarlet red
Her waist was bound with green
And every city that she went through
She was taken to be some queen.

5) She rode and rode 'till she came to the gate
She knocked so loud it rang
And none so ready as Lord Thomas himself
To rise and let her in.

6) He took her by the lily-white hand
And led her through the hall
And seated her down at the head of the table
'Mid gentlemen, ladies and all.

7) Lord Thomas, is this your bride to be ?
I'm sure she is quite brown
When you might have married as fair a maid
As e'er the sun shone on.

FAIR ELLENDER

(continued)

8) The Brown Girl had a small pen-knife
With edge both keen and sharp
She pierced through Fair Ellender's breast
Quite through Fair Ellender's heart.

9) Lord Thomas took her by the hand
And led her through the hall
And with his sword cut off her head
And kicked it against the wall.

10) He placed his sword against the wall
Its point toward his breast
So end three lovers, three lovers and all
God send their souls to rest.

FOLK LORE CONFERENCE

"Folklore in the Metropolis" is the subject of the second all-day folklore conference to be held on May 4th at Elizabeth Irwin High School, 40 Charleton Street, New York City. The conference is under the auspices of Camp Woodland, the originator of the annual Folk Festival of the Catskills. It will bring together a varied group of people--teachers, anthropologists, trade unionists, dancers, inhabitants of Tin Pan Alley - who have a common interest in the collection and utilization of folklore in a democracy. The all-day conference will be followed by an evening of Music and Dance in Folk Tradition.

The morning session will begin with a discussion of the living lore in New York City, led by Dr. Ben Botkin and Herbert Halpert. Alan Lomax and Pete Seeger will discuss and illustrate the interrelationship of rural and urban folklore.

The afternoon session includes a paper on "Yiddish Folksongs in New York City" by Ruth Rubin, folk singer and student of Jewish Secular songs. She will illustrate her paper with songs. Folklore in the many ethnic groups of the city will be treated by Mrs S. P. Jacobson, who will tell what happens to traditions brought over from Europe. Margot Mayo will discuss the folk dance in New York City.

The conference will close with a series of informal discussions when the audience will have the chance to talk with the experts on the subjects of their choice.

The evening entertainment, with Alan Lomax as master of ceremonies will illustrate the folklore of the metropolis. Among the artists performing will be Pete Seeger, Woodie Guthrie, and the Jefferson Chorus, directed by Horace Grenel.

In announcing the conference, Norman Studer, director of Camp Woodland said, "The purpose of our conference this year is to promote an awareness of the treasures on our urban doorstep. At the Conference people will sit down with schorlars to find out about the neglected lore that should become a part of the pattern of a democratic culture.

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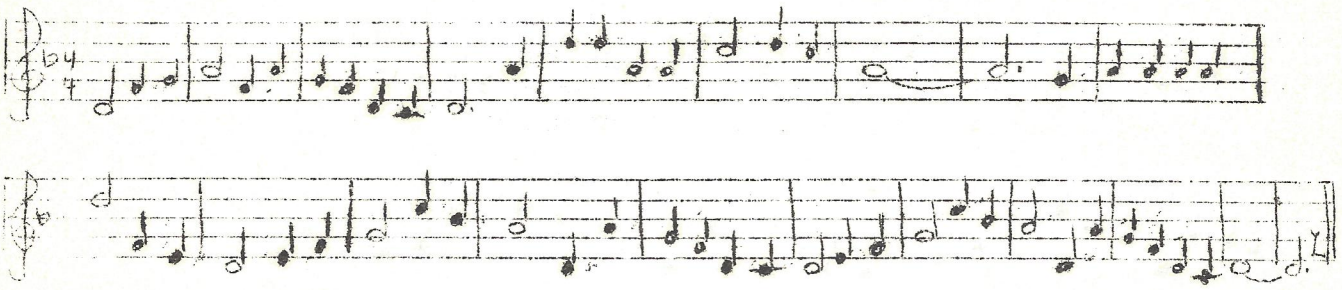
SONG BALLET

This song, collected by Margot Mayo, was sung to her by Aunt Liddy Walker, of Rudd Hollow, Tennessee, during the summer of 1935, Aunt Liddy had a memory chock full of old ballets and tunes, and sang them in the traditional nasal voice of the genuine folk singer. This song has no title. She just called it the "Song Ballet" and so that's what we call it. Aunt Liddy gave Margot the copy (or ballet) of the words, painfully written out in pencil, with all the flourishes of penmanship so carefully acquired by the "scholars" of the little one room schoolhouses.



1) Come all young people take warning by me
Don't ever be as fast as I have
I married me a wife make make me tired of my life
Let me strive and do all that I can, can, can
Let me strive and do all that I can.

2) She dresses me in rags, and the worst of old rags
While she dresses like a lady so fine
She goes into town, yes by day and by night
With the gentlemen do drink wine, wine, wine
With the gentlemen do drink wine.

3) When I go home, I'm just like one alone
I never speak a word she can hear
I'm so fearful of my doom I go marching to my room
With my bared joints all trembling with fear, fear, fear
With my bared joints all trembling with fear.

4) Six days in the week I must labor for my bread
While she swears three of them must be hers
She grumble and she squall and she swears she'll have them all
And she swears I'm obliged to montain her, her, her
And she swears I'm obliged to montain her.

5) Come welcome death and take away her breath
Give me back my freedom once more
I've lived out my days by hating of her ways
And I swear I'll never marry any more, more, more
And I swear I'll never marry any more.

AUNT LIDDY

Rudd Hollow was a tiny valley between tall, rugged mountains in the Smoky Mountain section of East Tennessee. There were a few cabins squatting beside a small stream of fresh, cool mountain water. You knew that if you followed this stream you'd come, eventually, to other squalid little homes clinging to the mountainsides.

Aunt Liddy lived in the first cabin after you left the highway. A twisting, dusty road led you up to a gate and there left you to your own devices. You had to leave the car there and go the rest of the way on foot. There was a pathway moseying along on the other side of the gate, and it straggled up the hillside and right into Aunt Liddy's front yard. The yard was a typical Southern front-yard, swept bare and with hard-trodden brown earth offering no solace to any grass that might be fool-hardy enough to attempt to grow there.

Aunt Liddy was about 86 years old the first summer we knew her. She had raised one family of her own and was then raising her son's children. The children's mother was dead, and the three children, their father and grandparents all lived together in the tiny two-room cabin.

Aunt Liddy was a wise and understanding "modern" grandmaw. Even though the neighbors criticized her with great severity, she let all her grandchildren learn music and bought them some instruments. She felt that it was better for the young'uns to enjoy staying at home than to have them running all over the countryside. And the kids did stay at home! Grandpaw would get out his fiddle and play for them, and the two youngest would improvise little jig-steps with their bare feet just a-flying over the splintery wooden floors. The grandfather, known as "Spicey Joe Walker" to distinguish him from the many Joe Walkers of the neighborhood, had "got religion" in his later years, and didn't foller music any more. But he could be persuaded to play for his family and still living, and holding together her little family by sheer will-power.

M. M.

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FOLK-CURES

Feeling that our readers may be in need of some of these helpful cures, we are passing them in for your benifit. With the exception of the first, all these old superstitions come from the Kentucky mountains, where I learned most of them from my aunt. The first comes from Virginia, and is rated a sure cure among some of the Negroes.

If you suffer from rheumatism, just steal a white potato and wear it in your left arm pit.

If you step on a rusty nail be sure to grease the nail with lard or bacon grease, immediately, and place the nail on a window sill... leave it there for several days. This prevents soreness in your foot.

You can get rid of certain illnesses by selling them, if you can find anyone who will buy them, for any little price, it doesn't matter how much or how small. So, next time you have a cold, or a stye, just get a friend to give you a nickel and you'll be cured at once.

Another way to cure a stye is to repeat the following rhyme and the stye will descend on the first person you see:

"Stye, stye, on my eye,
Go from me to the first one
Passing by."

Ring-worm, a serious problem in the South, can be cured by repeating this rhyme:

"Ring-worm, ring-worm
Ring-worm red
Ring-worm, ring-worm
I wish you was dead."

If you know any more of these cures, please send'em along for Promenade's collection.